

THE GUIDELINES OF THE SDC

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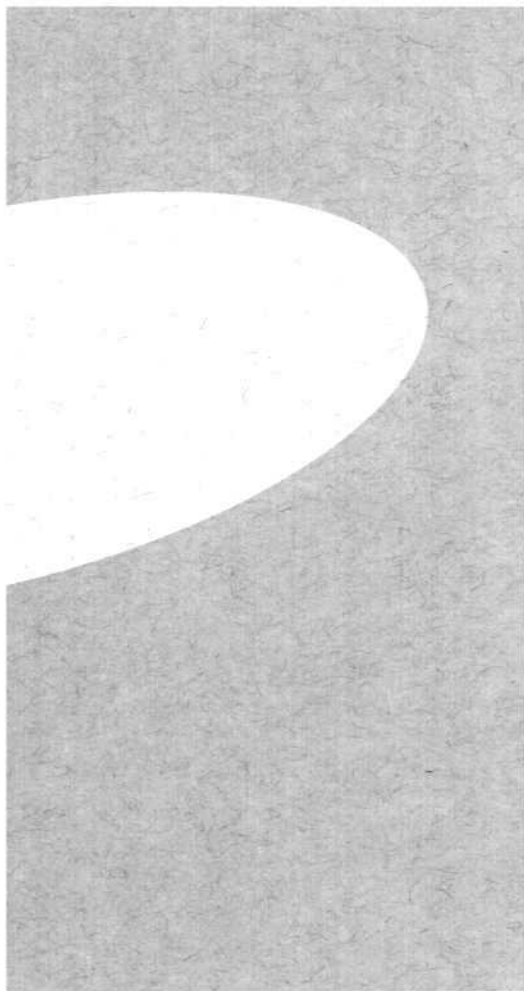
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SDC Swiss Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid

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The Guidelines of the SDC for the 1990s

The guidelines of the Swiss Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (SDC) describes the context and goals of its activities, and defines the values of the Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian aid programs.

It is intended for employees of the SDC, its partners in Switzerland and abroad, as well as for all interested parties.

The challenges

The challenges of the future reflect problems which transcend national borders: the environment, population growth, migration, famine, poverty, over-exploitation and squandering of resources, all issues which call for an "international domestic policy".

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Interaction among the various regions of the globe will certainly increase. The end of the cold war has suddenly activated international relations in unforeseen ways. This has resulted in a greater number of new tasks in planning the coordination of international development cooperation and humanitarian aid on a large scale.

Switzerland is a small piece of the developed Northern Hemisphere which in a global context makes it both very powerful and, at the same time, part of a minority. As a result, it has a dual responsibility:

- Firstly, to reduce poverty in a decisive manner worldwide. This is the essential condition for development, population control and efforts to prevent the over-exploitation of resources. This calls for developing the Southern Hemisphere just at a time when resources are limited.
- As a consequence, the second major responsibility incumbent on countries in the North is to reduce the resource waste in their own economic development.

Switzerland shares this responsibility not only in terms of solidarity but also because of its vital interest in the peaceful development of the world.

The mandate and the goals

Federal legislation concerning international development cooperation and humanitarian aid (March 19, 1976) prescribes the establishment of more equitable conditions within the international community as a long-term goal.

- Development cooperation supports efforts of developing countries to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants. It contributes by enabling these countries to ensure their development on their own initiative.
- Humanitarian aid, whether by preventive measures or emergency assistance, contributes to preserving human life and reducing suffering.

The mandate covers the entire globe.

- Humanitarian aid aimed at immediate action, and development cooperation focused on long-term objectives and permanent change, complement each other.

The SDC is part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAE). It coordinates development cooperation and humanitarian aid within the Federal administration and carries out the majority of the programs.

The SDC helps to assure that foreign policy takes into account the development of the Southern Hemisphere. In doing so, the SDC creates a positive image of Switzerland in many countries of the South.

The principal tasks abroad

The most pressing priorities for the 1990s are determined in part by the countries in the Southern Hemisphere themselves, but also by the international community as well as by the experience Switzerland has acquired in 30 years of activity in development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

The main goal of the SDC is to foster the optimal development of the individual within his or her natural, cultural and social environment.

Education, professional training and health measures are as necessary as general economic reforms. The efforts and activities of the SDC are effective only to the extent that the government and population of the partner country mobilize their own resources by using foreign aid efficiently and judiciously.

The SDC assists the most needy segments of the population with the aim of enabling them to provide for their own essential needs in areas such as food supply, housing, public health and education.

As poverty is generally the result of certain groups profiting at the expense of others, the SDC makes every effort to augment the economic, social and political means available among the poorer segments of the population. It supports their own organizations and facilitates their access to productive resources.

In this essential but problem-ridden area, development cooperation and humanitarian aid are closely coordinated, especially at the social level where paid employment is most difficult to obtain.

Organization of Society

The SDC encourages the growth of efficient public and private institutions.

The process of development and also the occasional crisis situation can be mastered only if the organizational potential within the community is developed.

Respect for human dignity and human rights are essential prerequisites for the development of the individual and the community.

Environment

The SDC is dedicated to fostering the process of development while respecting the environment. Only methods which preserve natural resources have a future role to play, resources such as the soil, forests, the air, water, plant, animal and human life.

Economy

In the Southern Hemisphere, the SDC gives priority to "environment-friendly" economic growth. Countries there possess considerable potential which would enable them to augment their productivity in agriculture, handicraft, small industry, transportation and credit. The SDC tries to ensure that economic policy in the North makes possible and attractive the sustainable use of resources in the South.

Principal tasks in Switzerland

The SDC informs the Swiss public about its various activities as well as about the actual situation and future prospects in the South. The information also concerns the repercussions of North-South relations on industrialized countries, especially

in matters such as security, the environment, asylum, research, in addition to commercial and financial policy.

The SDC is a partner in the formulation of a coherent Swiss policy in its relations with the South. In this way, the SDC openly confronts the inevitable conflicts among goals.

The SDC is careful to disseminate clear and realistic information which explains why, in the process of development, immediate successes are not always to be expected. The SDC also makes every effort to mobilize the necessary "synergy" among the various instruments of Swiss foreign, economic and social policy.

Strategic guidelines

The complex and often contradictory requirements which arise in development cooperation and humanitarian aid necessitate a clearly defined policy.

To attain its goals more effectively, the SDC focuses the means at its disposal on particular projects or within a particular geographic region. Its programs are innovative and open to new challenges.

Its diverse and difficult tasks imply an openness to constructive criticism.

The partners of the SDC

The principal partners of the SDC, with regard to planning and execution of programs, are governments, interested organizations and social groups. Dialogue and mutual cooperation demand respect for cultures and values different from our own.

In achieving its aims, the SDC must be able to depend on a large number of partners inside Switzerland and abroad. For this reason, the SDC maintains a continuous dialogue with universities, private enterprise and other interested parties concerning the challenges which lie ahead. A particularly intense cooperation has developed over the years with non governmental organizations (NGOs).

In the field of multilateral development cooperation, the SDC actively participates in the work of various institutions, in particular the United Nations and development banks.

Generally, the SDC assigns the execution of its programs to a third party. It thus assumes responsibility for development concepts, strategy and policy. In key areas, it ensures the necessary experience by realizing long-term programs on its own operational responsibility.

Organization and personnel

The SDC adapts its structure and methods to new conditions. This is based on its own experience, in addition to that of other organizations. Within its central services and its vast network of relations abroad, it encourages a certain clarity, a

clear division of responsibility, and simplicity in organizational structure and the decision-making process.

The cooperative style of leadership within the SDC is geared to offer support to its personnel, its essential resource. The SDC expects of its employees a high degree of commitment, initiative, professional and intellectual flexibility, the ability to sense the subtle aspects of a situation and to see interrelationships. Equally important is a flair for communication and dialogue, especially in a multi-cultural setting.

The SDC offers its employees interesting assignments in a variety of situations ranging from central administration to assisting in developing countries. In order to successfully accomplish its assignments, the SDC adopts a long-term policy of support to its personnel, particularly in connection with training and career-planning.

Perspectives

North-South relations will become more important and more contentious. The SDC must confront its complex tasks with relatively limited means. Sharing among partners for efficient and durable solutions will always be a challenge. Their application should be the responsibility of the developing countries themselves.

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